duty free for the manufacture of items for export under the Advance Licence Scheme as per the Standard Input Output Norms (SION) fixed for a particular item. Certain restrictions has been put in place for import of Natural Rubber duty free under this scheme. The Public Notices and the Policy Circulars imposing such restrictions have been set aside by the Bombay High Court. The SLP filed by the Government against this order was not admitted by the Supreme Court. As a result, restrictions imposed on import of Natural Rubber under the Advance Licence Scheme and stand removed.

(c) The Government is keenly monitoring the price as well as import of Natural Rubber in the country and will take appropriate action, if there is an undue surge in the import of Natural Rubber.

Liberalisation of norms for foreign technology agreements

740. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have liberalised the norms with regard to foreign technology agreements;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of agreements signed during the last three years; and

(d) the royalty paid against providing technological know-how to these countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) With a view to making industries increasingly competitive, the Government has progressively liberalized the policy on the Foreign Technology Collaboration Agreement by undertaking, *inter alia,* the following measures:

(i) The limit of lumpsum payment for Technology Collaboration under the automatic route was increased from Rs. 1 crore to US $ 2 million in 1996.

(ii) Royalty payment by wholly owned subsidiaries to their offshore parent companies was permitted under automatic route in the year 2000.

(iii) In June 2003, restriction on duration on royalty payment under the automatic route was removed irrespective of the extent of foreign equity participation.

(c) The number of Foreign Technology Collaboration approvals granted during the last three years is as under:

Year	Total
2000	418
2001	288
2002	307

(d) Data on royalty payments for technology collaborations with foreign entities are subsumed in the data relating to Current Account transactions maintained by Reserve Bank of India. Data on royalty payments is not maintained separately.

Incentives for Special Economic Zones

741. SHRI RAJ KUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have given more incentives to the Special Economic Zones and as a result the export Processing Zones;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the benefits derived from these incentives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) All the existing Export Processing Zone have been converted into Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Major incentives and facilities available under Special Economic Zone Scheme include duty free import/domestic procurement of goods for development, operation and maintenance of SEZs and units therein; external commercial borrowing without any maturity restriction through recognized banking channels; facility to set up Off-shore Banking Units in SEZs; exemption from service tax; exemption from Central Sales Tax on sales made from Domestic Tariff Area; Income-tax exemption